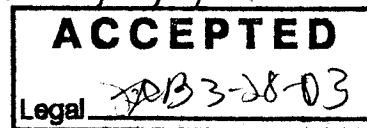


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March 27, 2003

The Honorable Gary E. Walsh
Executive Director
Public Service Commission of South Carolina
Synergy Business Park, Saluda Building
101 Executive Center Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Re: Proceeding to Establish Guidelines for an Intrastate Universal Service
Fund
Docket No. 97-239-C

Dear Mr. Walsh:

I am writing on behalf of the South Carolina Telephone Coalition ("SCTC") (see attached list of participating members) to request an extension of time in which to file tariffs associated with the State Universal Service Fund. The Guidelines and Administrative Procedures for the State USF that were approved by the Commission in its Order No. 2001-996 provide that the tariff filings to reduce rates that include an implicit subsidy for the second phase of State USF are to be made on April 1, 2003. We respectfully request that the companies be granted an extension of time in which to file those tariffs and accompanying cost data until June 1, 2003.

The reason for this request is that the Commission took action only this week on the request of six local exchange carriers to reduce rates and draw State USF in the end user step of the first phase of implementation of the State USF. Because it was the first time the Commission addressed the issue of cost studies filed by the companies to show implicit support in certain rates, the SCTC members felt it was advisable not to undertake the expense of new or additional cost studies until matters relating to the first phase of the State USF were resolved by the Commission.

We believe that the additional time being requested is needed by the SCTC companies to evaluate whether they will apply for additional State USF at this time and, if so, to complete appropriate cost studies. We believe granting the extension will not significantly impair the Commission's ability to implement additional USF funding, to the extent any such additional funding is requested, by October 1, 2003. This is particularly true in light of the fact that the Commission recently approved a request for an extension made by Alltel South Carolina, Inc.

South Carolina Telephone Coalition Member Companies

Bluffton Telephone Company, Inc.
Chesnee Telephone Company
Chester Telephone Company
Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Ft. Mill Telephone Company
Hargray Telephone Company, Inc.
Home Telephone Company, Inc.
Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Lancaster Telephone Company
Lockhart Telephone Company
McClellanville Telephone Company
Norway Telephone Company
Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
PBT Telecom, Inc.
Ridgeway Telephone Company
Rock Hill Telephone Company
Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
St. Stephen Telephone Company
West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Williston Telephone Company

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 97-239-C

IN RE: Proceeding to Establish Guidelines)
 for an Intrastate Universal)
 Service Fund)
_____)

**CERTIFICATE OF
SERVICE**

I, Sherry Schelble, do hereby certify that I have this date served one (1) copy of the foregoing letter upon the following counsel of record by causing said copy to be deposited with the United States Mail, first class postage prepaid and addressed as follows:

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March 27, 2003

Columbia, South Carolina